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## Cognitive Principles and Persuasiveness of Social Anti-Drug Advertising

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E.G. Kulikova<sup>1</sup>, L.A. Brusenskaya<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:**

*Moral emancipation in post-perestroika Russia led to a massive drug abuse, at the same time narcotization has no cognitive or religious impulse, but rather is connected with hedonistic tendencies (along with many other phenomena of modern civilization, especially mass culture). The problem of the relationship of drug abuse with deviant behavior has been dramatically worsened. Anti-drug direction with prominent role of social advertising in it, is very important.*

*The most important methodological postulate was the position about the empirical method of cognitive linguistics, which is to follow all the nuances of language forms and to find their ultimate explanation in the cognitive structures device.*

*Cognitive approach to social advertising considers that the recipient of the advertisement perceives it through the prism of individual constructs. Persuasiveness in anti-drug advertising relies not only on logic but on psychology, and the axiology. Interpretative approach and hermeneutic approach, linguistic deduction and induction were used.*

**Keywords:** Social advertising, anti-drug advertising, persuasiveness, cognition.

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<sup>1</sup>D.Sc. in Linguistics, Professor, Department of Russian Language and Speech Culture, Rostov State University of Economics.

<sup>2</sup>D.Sc. in Linguistics, professor, Department of Russian Language and Speech Culture, Rostov State University of Economics.

## 1. Introduction

Mankind use drugs since ancient times, but today modern societies deal not with the ritual use of narcotic substances and the ordinary desacralizing drug addiction, which has "leisure" and –most important– massive nature. The reported study was funded by RFBR according to the research project № 17-04-00109. External factors that create the conditions for the formation of addiction, such as the geographic proximity of the centers of drug production, the tradition of drug use, political and social instability, crisis of values of humanism and spirituality, are well-known.

The nation is called "hopeless", if from 7 to 11% of the population take drugs. In Russia, this figure reached 3.5 % (Ischenko, 2007). In these circumstances, the social urgency of anti-drug advertising is obvious. Modern social advertising is a part of a system of socio-ethical marketing, which is a planning, development, promotion and evaluation of programs aimed at the social life improving. Social advertising is responsible for the promotion of socially significant ideas, including the creation of information field, aimed at prevention of drug abuse.

Modern Russian society is rightly characterized as open to various influences (including negative ones, provoking different deviation), but not protected from them due to the crisis of spiritual and moral sphere (Volkov *et al.*, 2016). Reforming the post-Soviet space have undermined the foundations of Russian society, its social immune system, brought to life forms of a social and deviating behavior (drugs, gambling, xenophobia), not having cultural roots in Russian society. "Russian world unites not just those who speaks language, but who has absorbed the traditional Russian values, as well as representatives of traditional Russian character, in fact, we can endure anything if truth and beauty are (Yampolskaya, 2017).

Advertising performs a kind of human adaptation to the existing social world. A young person by 20 years watches at a huge number of promotional videos (about 1 million), that is, in a situation when another important source of influence – literature – has lost its positions, advertising (along with the media in general) took this place. Advertising (especially social one) is impossible to be neutralized to the level of a simple message, artifact of mass culture; its role in society is immeasurably more significant.

However, the potential of social advertising is not always used effectively. Russian media are engaged in the topic of drug abuse although actively, but not always professionally (Ischenko, 2007). Scholars are quite right when they point out the low efficiency of modern social advertising in general and paradoxical situation social advertising in particular (Shapovalov, 2012; Seydametov, 2016).

Drug abuse continues to exist and get worse, and journalists and advertisers often act without considering the specifics of the topic of addiction. Meanwhile, anti-

drug advertising may even have the opposite effect. Paradoxical situations arise when anti-drug activity is counter productive. That is why anti-drug advertising should be explored, taking into account characteristics of the cognitive mechanisms of its formation and perception, taking into account the specifics of its persuasiveness.

## **2. Methods**

The study is based on the general scientific principle of dialectics, considering things in their interconnection and interdependence. The most important methodological postulate was the position about the empirical method of cognitive linguistics, which is to follow all the nuances of the language forms and to find their ultimate explanation in the cognitive structures device (Kibrik, 2008).

The specificity of the studied problem area led to the hermeneutic approach, focused on interpretation and explanation. The method of linguistic deduction and induction was used as well. Interpretative approach, based on the assumption that the values do not exist in isolation, are not contained in words and sentences and are not extracted from them, but are understood by the recipient on the basis of the speech features and context, was extremely relevant.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1 Advertising as a tool for the formation of social behavior**

Rapidly changing world has created an important tool for the formation of social behavior. It is advertising, which aims to determine not only the purchasing of some goods and services, but also standards, rules of human behavior in society. Social advertising actively encourages individuals to review their existing goals, values, attitudes, adopting those that provide the development of his morals, work skills and culture. The formation of the characteristics of social advertising is based on categories such as clarity, compliance with urgent issues - the "spirit" of the time, the lack of clear similarities with commercial and political advertising, the combination of information about a social issue with a clarification of the ways of solving it. It is important the presence of a wide network of channels for the social advertising broadcast, as well as the variety of forms of presentation of information (electronic, print, etc.). It is extremely important to have feedback channels with the target audience.

Improving persuasiveness of social advertising in Russia, able to really influence the decision of fundamental problems of society, revival of spiritual values and cultural potential of the Russian society depends on how comprehensive and informative nature of the activities to improve the social advertising in Russia (Shapovalov, 2012). So, in prevention of drug abuse it is necessary to have in mind the following: foundation of "narcotic" subculture is the "hedonistic worldview", i.e., system of

ideas about the enjoyment as the basic values of life. According to its biochemical nature, ability to cause high-intensity sensations of pleasure drugs are a popular subject of hedonistic activity (Ischenko, 2007). Advertising, actively promoting hedonism (Take everything from life!), reaching nearest pragmatic goals, may provoke socially dangerous behavior, including drug abuse. *"Addiction as a mass phenomenon is a product of modern society with its anomie, ethical relativism, a focus on fun and entertainment"* (Karim, 2004).

Unlike commercial advertising, social advertising often promotes elimination of (tobacco, alcohol, drugs), but not using, and it is not aimed not immediate result, but prolonged behavior. And the rhetoric of advertising is not only the persuasion to do something, it is also the persuasion not to do something, to refrain from destructive social behavior. That is social advertising appeals to that it is difficult. So, it must consider the cognitive mechanisms of implementation of persuasiveness. In modern communication the perlocutionary function of social advertising is changing, it becomes more persuasive and less straightforward (compared to the propaganda directed functions) (Mescheryakova, 2012).

Implicative relationship between verbalized and non-verbalized information are always present in the minds of the participants of communication. Informative content of linguistic units (primarily narrative and text) is determined not only by their formal lexical and grammatical filling, but also it is based on past experience, perception direction, linguistic-cultural situation, a point of view on a subject, etc. On the basis of explicit values implicit information derived from them is generated, and the identification of implicit meanings is possible only on the basis of the correlation of the explicit values and the total content of the narrative (text). It is well known, the implication in the language is associated with the manifestation of the universal principle of economy - economical representation of extralinguistic content, economy of language and mental efforts; the language tends to transfer greater amount of information per unit of time. This is achieved either by compression (reduction of the number of significant units within the large units) or supersegmentation represented on a substantial level by presuppositions.

There is an asymmetry of the denotate and significate in the language system, as the sender of message obviously cannot "tell all," especially if we are talking about such a compact genre, as advertising. For understanding the implicit information inherent in the linguistic units it is actual the doctrine of presuppositions. "Fund of general knowledge", or "situational background" which supposes a "preliminary agreement" and ensures adequate understanding of verbal communication is highlighted in the definition of the presuppositions. Background information consists of knowledge, collective ideas and definitions fixed in the system of concepts of a specific language, in every cultural and linguistic picture of the world; in other words, background knowledge is a mutual understanding of relevant circumstances by an addressee and an addresser. Presupposition includes all that lies outside of the message, but connected with it in certain way and guarantees a correct and

comprehensive understanding of the message. According to this approach, knowledge of language is not only knowledge of the rules of generation of the statements, but also knowing what presuppositions should be taken into account, when the reflection of the presuppositions in the surface structure is appropriate or inappropriate. The success of social advertising *Call your parents!* is largely determined by reliance on the general background circumstances and shared presuppositions.

### **3.2 Anti-drug advertising and connection with the most important factors of narcotization**

Anti-drug advertising should be based on a clear understanding of the most important factors of narcotization, especially such as curiosity and the desire for dereflection. (In this regard, the title of the article Guldán and Korsun (1990) "Search for Impressions as a Factor of Initiation of Adolescents to Drugs"). Curiosity is an inherent property of consciousness, its aspiration to go out of its own boundaries, its research "ripple". Coming from time to time, the "impossibility" of everyday life, "painful conditions", "tedium", the desire for change and novelty, longing for travel and adventure are reflected in the drug use. The desire for dereflection can be satisfied in three ways; the mythologization of the world (the person is not separateness – and also the world, his / her place is harmonious and defined by myth, the world itself is explained by a myth and "domesticated", made suitable for life), suicide (there is no inner speech - no reflection - no suffering, the way to get rid of inner speech is to destroy her holder) and narcotization, which either blocks the reflection completely, or weakens it, distracts from it and completely immerses him / she into any feeling or any activity (Kudashev and Mosienko, 2015).

The purpose of anti-drug activity should be educating people, cultivating self-preservation type of behavior. Strategic priority of activity against drug addiction must be positive prevention which focuses not on pathology, not on the problem and its consequences, but on educating the personally developed person, which is able to solve his/her psychological and life problems and does not require taking drugs.

However, it should be noted that frequently used in advertising, exaggeration of the danger from the soft drugs (allowed in some countries and in some American States) can have the opposite effect and cause distrust to the advertising message in general. A modern approach to advertising requires veracity, authenticity, completeness in the reproduction of life. The point is that adults produce promotional video based on their ideas, pragmatic co-meanings and absolutely not suspect that the reactions of adolescents are paradoxical; the fact that adults seem terrible may be highly attractive for them. And the beautiful visuals only exacerbates typical for teenager desire for risk; "movie" directly points the way to get what he subconsciously wants. This is especially true for the youngest age group, 11-13-year-old group of teenagers. Modern social advertising should seek to avoid direct propaganda, should

be a dialogue between the person and the problem, the dialogue between the individual and society. Posters with demonic images of junkies, injecting drugs, smelling the powder, pictures of the pierced hands – all of these are the arsenal of the past. A clear demonstration of the drug abuse creates a tension that a person sometimes just doesn't allow to enter consciousness.

Much more important to show not that you need to avoid, but that to strive for. Anti-drug advertising is inseparable from propaganda not just a healthy lifestyle, but "philosophy of health". In general anti-drug advertising is extremely delicate and fragile instrument that may be not just useless, but even dangerous. So, it was repeatedly noted that such advertising may draw attention to the issue of drugs, to arouse unformed person's destructive interest, curiosity to this area (and curiosity is an integral desire of consciousness to to go beyond its borders).

Propaganda of "horror" demonizing the image of the addict is much less effective than targeted education (including through social advertising) of will power, faith in own abilities than the formation of a "philosophy of health". The basic principle of the "philosophy of health" is that a human lives in accordance with a sense of proportion, harmony, unity and the harmony of the body with nature and the development of the biosphere as a whole. According to this philosophy health is understood as the most important value of human life. Anti-drug advertising should be primarily focused on the development of internal resources of the individual and the full socialization of the person. Textbooks for advertisers argue that anti-drug advertising should not cause depressive feelings, on the contrary – its purpose is to give a positive charge to create a positive make this positive image more vivid and memorable than all the negativity.

It is known, social advertising can use various images of the communicator; a tutor, a companion, a victim, an aggressor and a provocateur. Social anti-drug advertising uses, above all, tutor and companion. The advertising law contains a statement that "advertisement cannot benefit from the reputation of the person". It is clear, this provision is not compatible the usual practice of media persons participation in advertising. This does not apply to social advertising. For example the idea that the social advertising, dedicated to drug prevention, is in the highest degree persuasive, if as the anti-drug image is chosen a person you trust, which makes a good impression (a famous athlete, actor) that can be a role model (Filatov and Konovalov, 2010). Unfortunately, the "mediapersons" little suit for this role.

Information about a social problem may be presented in the social advertising both implicitly, and explicitly, due to the choice of approach to the creation of social advertising. Persuasiveness of advertising depends on the willingness of the society to accept it. On the one hand, modern society is quite ready for it, as all the negativity of drug abuse is well known (from real life, from art and media), and, on the other hand, modern ideas about tolerance today often apply to this area.

Tolerance is a key concept of the XX-th century. According to the Declaration of principles on tolerance, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO (1995), tolerance means, including, respect, acceptance and appreciation of our forms of self-expression and ways of displays of human individuality (Samokhvalova, 2014). However, it is not wrong to extend to the obviously detrimental phenomena that all cause direct harm to both the individual and the society as a whole should be eliminated from the sphere of individual freedom and related to the field of law (Sobchak *et al.*, 2017). It is clear that such publications does not contribute to the displacement of the drug from the consciousness of adolescents and a positive perception of drug laws.

### **3.3 Advertising text**

Investigating the level of awareness among juveniles about the various aspects of the drug abuse, the scholars found that elements of drug abuse jargon is familiar and widely used already in primary school. The media should prevent the spread of the jargon (and, hence, and drug subcultures), the penetration of it into a language of a wider audience (Kulikova *et al.*, 2016; Kulikova and Brusenskaya, 2017). Meanwhile, we have to admit that "Argo of addicts and traffickers of drugs in the short term shifted in scope, from distant secondary locations onto the first ones; it consists of about 3000 lexemes and phraseological units (Grachev, 2016). The whole strategy against drug abuse should be aimed at creating anti-drug climate in the community, the widespread rejection of drugs and combining the healthy forces, in order for drug users and the organizers of the drug business really could feel the rigidity of not only the authorities but also the whole population in relation to illegal drug trade. Most of the texts of social advertising are characterized by a specific correlation of the non-verbal (visual) and verbal parts.

Unlike commercial advertising text in which, as a rule, a visual part plays the dominant role of meaning, in the texts of social advertising in most cases the verbal part performs the basic conceptualizing function in solving the task of expressive and pragmatic impact. In general semiotics of social advertising is focused on the mechanisms of verbal impact on the recipients. Typical semiotic device (relying on the verbal component) and pragmatic features of social advertising determine language means usage in advertising texts of social orientation. In general, the verbal part of the advertising text is characterized by a quite simple syntactic structure, which can be explained by a desire for brevity, the semantic capacity of expression.

The vast majority of social advertising texts are characterized by aphoristic nature, the moral-didactic orientation. While social advertising is much less characterized with common occasional vivid imagery (new, unexpected metaphors, figures of speech). Social advertising mainly uses already established in public language usage figurative expressions. The revival of the social shaped stamps is due to the correlation of the verbal part of the advertising text with non-verbal visual component. The texts of social advertising are based on intertextual association - on

the use of idioms, expressions or sayings from movies, plays, songs, works of literature (Mescheriakova, 2012). The main stages of persuasiveness of social advertising are: 1) the adoption of social standards; 2) the awareness of the problem and the reassessment of values; 3) the performance of a single action; 4) the formation of behavioral stereotype and refuse from negative behavior.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Rhetoric of social advertising and the target audience**

The rhetorical promise of advertising is persuasion (Khazagerov, 2013; Khazagerov and Glushko, 2015). The search for an adequate methodological platform on which honest conviction will be possible, do not stop. For example, manipulative effect in anti-drug advertising deliberately exaggerated the danger of the soft drugs (permitted in some countries and in some American States), is unlikely to have the desired effect. Moreover, such advertising will cause distrust to information in general. The legalization of "light drugs" has received support even from the scientific community as "harm reduction" (Bewley and Taylor, 2013).

In Russia, talkings about "light" drugs (Greenfield and Paoli, 2012; Duff, 2013), the promotion of the idea of legalization are especially dangerous because, as shown, the transition of our adolescents from "light" drugs to "hard" ones is much faster than in other countries (Ischenko, 2007). Among two main approaches creating social advertising (the first one "hard" problem accentuation, exaggerated naturalism, references to the experience of the victim, with the use of the motive of fear) and "soft" one using positive motivation, actualization of positive emotions and the absence in the text focus on the problem) the majority of researchers prefer soft option. In the Russian professional community of advertisers there is a tendency to limit "hard" approach in creating social advertising (Dykin, 2009).

Social advertising causes that a person takes necessary for the society value orientations and attitudes wishing to modify. Accordingly, these requirements must be purposefully shaped. Anti-drug policy of the media should manifest itself in the circularity and continuity of information, specific targeting, functionality, impact both on rational and emotional sphere and the reliability of the data. Materials that give the opportunity to find justification for the drugs addiction, put the drug abuser to the position of the unconscious victim of circumstances must be removed.

Materials from which readers or audiences can glean information about how to get, make and use drugs are unacceptable. Thoughts about "safe" drugs are definitely harmful. The lightest of them is a "time bomb". Terminology used is such as "controlled drinking", "minimal harm", "short-term harmful effects", "drugs, mood-altering". It is necessary to get away from the idea that drug abuse is a personal matter for each individual.



On the contrary, it is necessary to introduce into the mass consciousness the fact that the addict is not just the patient, but, above all, a socially dangerous person. However, it is necessary to observe a measure and to avoid any unnecessary intimidation with information about drugs. It is advisable to provide any frightening information with practical recommendations how to avoid threats, how to behave in difficult situations (Ischenko, 2007).

Anti-drug advertising needs to consider the target audience. Everything is important; even the design and choice of information channels. We must understand that the recipients of younger ages because of less life experience and less social awareness, are absolutely not aware of the drugs danger. Those who are just at risk group and those who are already involved in drug abuse, react differently to the same advertising message. Finally, there are those who are under the powerful influence of the drug subculture, formed a false notion to them.

In the competent advertising campaign target audience is included into the strategy as a structurally significant component. The target audience of advertising is understood as roughly outlined circle of people with objective characteristics. Unaddressed advertising such as *Say no to drugs!* is unlikely to be effective. Target audience, according to Novikov (2007), is the "trigger" of advertising form of communication. Making one or the other image explicit, the advertisement includes information that is close and clear for the target audience, that is part of her lifestyle.

Pragmatic adequacy of the advertisement depends on the targeted audience. It is clear that the advertisement for parents and the advertisement for teenagers as target audience, will be radically different. Advertising for teenagers must teach adaptive lifestyle, communication skills, ability to make independent decisions and to resist the suggestions of using drugs, but advertisement for parents should appeal to the sense of parental duty.

#### **4.2 Interaction between the addresser and the addressee in social advertising**

Ideally, anti-drug social advertising in general and advertising in particular is a complex cognitive process, which determines the interaction between the addresser and the addressee. The author's modality is transmitted using a combination of linguistic and paralinguistic means. A common statement of many studies on the prevention of drug addiction is the idea that the main preventive measure should be knowledge of the truth about the consequences of drug use. However, this question is not as simple as it seems at first glance.

There is a general definition of drugs as substances of vegetable or synthetic origin, which after introducing into the body may modify one or more of its functions, and as result of repeated use can lead to the formation of psychic and physical dependence (addiction). But there are gradations of drugs in the impact on the person, and there is a strong opinion about the relative safety of "light" drugs.

Rather, the emphasis should be on exposing the very concept of "light" drugs. Scholars pointed out that the real effectiveness of commercial advertising practically does not depend on the willingness (or unwillingness) to trust it as a communication channel. In spite of advertising is often perceived as an unwanted hindrance, it turns out that choosing the brand of product the consumer chooses the one that was persistently advertised. That is, the advertising effect is an effective tool, which allows to influence the behaviour of people, despite the fact that the people themselves do not realize are the degree of these impacts or think it low.

Recipients of advertising communication often underestimate the impact of communication channels of influence on their choice. "Modern methods of posttesting can determine the effect of advertising effect on the recipient at the most important levels: cognitive level (the realm of consciousness, rational activity); affective level (area of attitudes and motivation); conative level (behavior, actions) (Tatianchenko, 2004). And if the effectiveness of commercial advertising can be carefully calculated the impact of social advertising is deliberately delayed.

The effectiveness of social advertising is defined in two areas: 1) awareness; 2) positive attitude to advertising. The real value of social advertisement using is impossible to measure in monetary terms. Social advertising does not bring direct and quick returns - here you need to tune to last long result. But investment into social advertising will return to the quality of relationships between people. As for anti-drug advertising, it can play a positive role only in combination with many other forms of anti-drug activities. The formation of anti-drug public opinion is very important, it realizes itself not only as a judgment on the drug situation, but also as a behavioral willingness of citizens to exercise social control over drug trafficking.

In the conditions of information society "drugconflict" due to the sharp accumulation of volume of information is becoming well-known in the public sphere, that greatly influences the nature of its deployment. A necessary task for the achievement of goals has become the focus of public opinion, which directly affects the result (Sunami, 2014, P. 38). The significance of anti-drug public opinion is in the following: it does not allow to experiment with drugs without the risk to become an outcast of society, the risk of obstruction. And the media and advertising should use all means to form anti-drug public opinion.

## **5. Conclusion**

Thus drug abuse is not because of educational or religious impulse, but because of hedonistic considerations has become a mass phenomenon that threatens social security. Therefore it is necessary to provide extensive anti-drug activity of the state and society. Informative-analytical support of anti-drug activity is extremely important.

The main feature of social advertising is that it promotes the values which cannot be formed only under the influence of advertising. Human behavior is determined by a set of socio-economic factors, including socio-political system, traditions, customs, standards of work organization, life, leisure, taken in the social group to which person belongs. Social advertising is just one of the tools of formation of social behavior of modern person. It encourages rational reasonable revision of valuable orientations by demonstrating approved by the society forms of realization of such qualities as kindness, social activity, and health care.

Social advertising is sometimes perceived as a simple and accessible means of solving problems. Advertising without taking into account cognitive and pragmatic factors can be not just useless, but even dangerous social tool. Therefore, persuasiveness of advertising should be carefully computed and analyzed with the help of feedback channels. If the position of the authors of anti-drug advertising is obvious, the nature of the perception of advertising messages by potential recipients depends on many socially determined factors. It is impossible to form useful advertising in the framework of anti-drug policy without taking into account all this diverse information.

Social advertising promoting universal values, is a necessary and full-fledged social institution, an important element in the formation of the world outlook and moral health of society. This is connected with the need for further integration of advertising communication into the arsenal of tools of social impact. It is obvious that today our society needs new forms of struggle against illegal drug trafficking and drug abuse among the population. It is not enough just to "catch and treat". It is necessary to change the entire infrastructure of socialization of young people.

And social advertising can be one of the most powerful factors. In the youth cultivating of universal spiritual values – responsibility, conscience, ideas of serving the people, the awareness of belonging to a country with a great history and great culture is much more important than simple promotion of sports. It is extremely important to introduce the idea of self-realization through spiritual growth, creativity, useful work. Advertising needs to focus on the search for internal protection against narcocracy pressure. It is important to explore very closely the deeper foundation that must determine the choice of strategy of advertising discourse and cognitive basis of anti-drug advertising. A perspective resource for research is the further observation on social advertising persuasiveness, including using sociological methods of questionnaire survey.

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